THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) and (b) During the visit of the then Raksha Mantri to Russia in October, 1997 both India and Russia agreed, in principle, to extend the existing Long Term Progranune of Military Technical Co-operation between the two countries, beyond December, 1999 and up to the year 2010. The draft text of the Agreement was finalised during the visit of Defence Secretary to Russia from 15—19 June, 1998. The draft text provides for the mechanism for implementing and monitoring the long-term programme of military technical co-operation. It will not be in the interest of national security to disclose details of activities under the Military Technical Co-operation between the two countries.

Using lAF aircraft for non-official purposes

4618. SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state the penalties that are prescribed for a Minister or offdal of his Ministry who uses lAF Aircraft for non-official purposes and misrepresent them to have been Official?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): If an official journey is later proved to be a non-official one, recovery proceedings can be initiated by the appropritite competent authority.

Recovering of lAF aircraft expenditure

4619. SHRI ARUN SHOURIE: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state whether there is any provision of law under wlich Government may waive responsibility of recovering the expenditure incurred on lAF aircraft by the Defence Minister for non-official journeys unconnected with the work of the Defence Ministry?:

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): The rules in force state that no recoveries will be made only in cases in which the Prime Minister considers it desirable that airlifts should be provided free of charge for reasons of state.

Jawans to dlitlnguish alien aircrafts

4620. SHRI PRAFULL GORADIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a. fact that the surveillance system on the aircraft flying in the insurgency-ridden North-East has been revamped;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether any specialised training has been given to jawans to distinguish between our own and the alien aircraft?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Surveillance System in the North-East has been improved. However, in the interest of national security it will not be desirable to disclose the details in this regard.

Defence radar system on Western Coast

4621. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether radar system of Navy and other defence forces on Western Coast is not functioning properly;

(b) whether the warning of coming cyclone approaching west coast that caused havoc on 9th June, 1998 in Kandla in Gujarat was not noticed on radar system; and

(c) if so, what steps have been taken to ensure proper functioning of radar system on Western Coast of the country?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORQE FERNANDES): (a) and (d) The Indian Navy and Indian Air Force do not have dedicated weather radars. Such radan an normally operated by the India Meteorological

Department (IMD). Weather messages are broadcast by the coastal radio stations for all mariners at sea, while local weather warnings are relayed through port organisations along the coast. In addition, Indian Navy also broadcasts normal weather messages to all ships twice daily from its wireless stations. In case the weather deteriorates or a cyclone develops, this frequency of transmission is increased.

(e) Not applicable.

Conveyance allowance to army personnel

4622. SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO:
SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases with regard to the payment of conveyance allowance to army personnel for attending resettlement, courses attached to them before retirement where pre-boarding/ lodging was not provided which are pending with Government for settlement;

(b) whether they have been granted NRA for the said period; and

(c) if so, the reasons for delay in settlement of such claims?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (c) Requisite information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Task forces for defence design

4623. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Confederation of Indian Industries and the Defence Research and Development Organisation have decided to set up a number of task forces to work out a joint partnership in defence design, development, production and marketing of products; and

(b) if so, the details of the task forces indicating the areas of cooperation to be explored?

THE- MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Six task forces have been constituted by the Ministry of Defence to submit recommendations to enhance partnership between the Defence Ministry and the Industry.

(b) These Joint Task Forces have been constituted to submit recommendations in the following areas with a view to enhance the partnership with the Industry:—

(i)Defence-Industry Long Term Partnership, (ii) Commercial Process, (iii) DRDO-Industry Partnership. Civ)Private Sector Undertakings/ Ordnance Factories/Private Sector complimentary, (v) Defence Export Strategy. (vi)Information Technology for Defence.

Modernisation of Fire Services

4624. SHRI C. RAMACHAND-RAIAH: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal has come from Andhra Pradesh for modernising and expanding fire services;

(b) whether there are some Central Government schemes to fmance the development of fire services; and

(c) if so, the details of schemes and finances offered to State Governments to upgrade their fire services?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L. K. ADVANI): (a) No such proposal has been received in the recent past.

(b) and (c) The Tenth Finance Commission has allocated Rs. 8000.00 lakhs for the States for upgradation of their fire services. The share of Andhra